

# The Bulletin

Blinded Veterans Helping Blinded Veterans

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



**WWI**  
**100**  
**YEARS**

**VETERANS DAY**

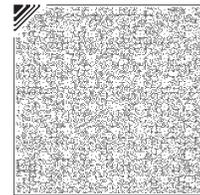
NOVEMBER 11, 2018



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**Cover Photo:** 2018 marks the Centennial Commemoration of the end of World War I on November 11, 1918. The theme for the 2018 Veterans Day poster is: “The War to End All Wars”. The year’s poster depicts the remembrance poppy and a barbed wire fence. The poppy has been used since 1921 to commemorate military personnel who have died in war and was inspired by the World War I poem “In Flanders Fields”. The barbed wire represents the thousands of miles of wire that was spread by both sides in WWI.

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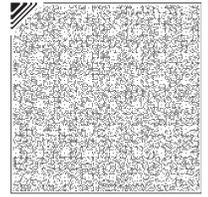
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## President's Page

by Joe Parker



On Veteran's Day, we have always recognized the men and women who have or are serving

in America's Armed Forces. It has been described as a day to not only celebrate their heroism, service and sacrifice, but also to reflect and remember.

Most everyone knows about its origin, when on November 11, 1918, at the eleventh hour, all fighting stopped between the Allied nations and Germany, ending World War I. The actual legal federal holiday was approved by Congress in 1938 as Armistice Day. It wasn't until 1954, following World War II and the Korean War, that Congress replaced "Armistice" with "Veterans," amending the original Act to commemorate November 11—a day in America when veterans of all wars are honored.

This year, 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. A largely forgotten war, seen mostly through old grainy film footage of exploding bombs, young troops marching off to war at a quick pace, and apocalyptic scenes hard to imagine, called no-man's land.

The legacy of this war is hard to imagine. There are still areas of France that are off limits due to the unexploded ordnance.

World War I took the lives of more than 9 million soldiers; 21 million were wounded. Civilian casualties caused indirectly by the war numbered close to 10 million. The two nations most affected were Germany and France, each of which sent some 80 percent of their

male populations between the ages of 15 and 49 into battle. The U.S. lost more than 116,000 in a matter of 18 months.

The political disruption surrounding World War I, also contributed to the fall of four venerable imperial dynasties—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey. Boundaries in the Middle East were redrawn resulting in the conflicts of today. It also led directly to World War II.

World War I brought about massive social upheaval, as millions of women entered the workforce to support men who went to war, and to replace those who never came back. The first global war also helped to spread one of the world's deadliest global pandemics, the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918, which killed an estimated 20 to 50 million people.

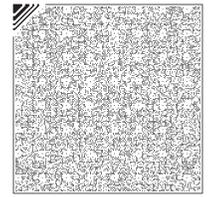
World War I has also been referred to as "the first modern war." Many of the technologies we now associate with military conflict—machine guns, tanks, aerial combat and radio communications—were introduced on a massive scale during World War I.

Chemical weapons, such as mustard gas and phosgene, were used for the first time and resulted in Geneva Convention agreements that restricted the use of chemical and biological agents in warfare, and remains in effect today. In some cases it is a red line that must not be crossed.

The more than 4 million Americans who served will soon get their own Memorial in Pershing Park, in Washington D.C. It is only right this happens. They earned it.



## BVA Executive Director Joe Bogart Addresses Members



Hello from Headquarters! The air is cooler, the leaves are changing and pumpkin spice is everywhere. Which means only one thing, autumn has arrived along with holiday observations and gatherings of family and friends, and it all starts off with Veteran's Day.

100 years ago, the war to end all wars ended at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Armistice Day reigned for years as a day to remember and honor the sacrifices made by warriors from all over the world in the muddy trenches and on the bloody battlefields of the Great War in places like Mons, the Somme, Verdun, Meuse-Argonne, Aisne or Flanders. Then in 1954, after the United States had experienced a second world war and war in Korea, veteran service organizations successfully lobbied congress to rename November 11th to Veteran's day and honor veterans of all wars.

Today, Veteran's Day stands to honor all peacetime or wartime honorably serving veterans. And, I thank all veterans for their honorable service because each of you wrote a blank check to this country for the sum of up to and including your life. And, while we remember our brothers and sisters in arms during this Veterans Day, let us also remember those still fighting the darkness of grief and conflict in their soul.

We blinded veterans have weathered the grieving process and journeyed the darkness more than once. This gives

us the expert authority to guide our sibling warfighters through the dark places to a successful life and to thrive in their community and society! After all, it is our mission to promote the welfare of blinded veterans and work with our fellow citizens to create a peaceful world. We do this by leading from the front, mentoring as a peer, and encouraging as a follower; for all positions allow blinded veterans to set the example of surviving to thrive in life and build that peaceful world.

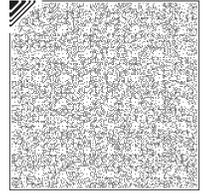
And that peaceful world begins in our souls. So as Veteran's Day begins the holidays, remember to reach out to one another, and our fellow veteran organizations to help light up the darkness for those struggling. Offer a kind word, an ear to listen, a shoulder to lean on as we experts of surviving and thriving the grief and darkness of war, wounds, loss and blindness can lead our fellow veterans to a peaceful soul, society and world.

On behalf of everyone here at BVA Headquarters, may you all light up the darkness and thrive in your communities, across America and around the world during all of the wonderful holidays!



# Legislative Update

by Melanie Brunson



## Bills To Aid Veterans Become Law

In the weeks since our last update, several bills have been approved by Congress and signed into law by President Trump that address some of BVA's long standing legislative priorities. Most notable of these is the appropriations bill that funds the U.S. Dept. of Defense. This bill is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it marks the first time in twenty-two years that the Pentagon will start a new federal fiscal year with its funding in place. Second, and equally significant for BVA, this funding includes the appropriation of the full \$20 million for DoD's Vision Research Program, which BVA and our friends in the research community requested this year. We are very pleased by this funding increase and look forward to the advances in diagnosis and treatment of battlefield eye trauma that will result.

Several other bills of interest have made it through Congress and were signed into law by the President within the last few weeks. These include the Veterans Compensation Cost-Of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018, which provides for adjustments in compensation levels equal to those made each year for Social Security benefits. This will mean a change in how rates are computed each year for recipients of VA disability compensation, dependency compensation for surviving children and spouses, and those veterans who receive clothing allowances. Increases in benefits resulting from this legislation will take effect on December 1 each year.

Beginning December 1, 2018, for example, those who receive benefits under any of the programs mentioned above will receive an increase in the amount of 2.8%.

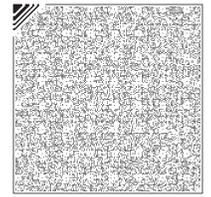
We are also pleased to report that the President has signed legislation implementing the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for people who are blind, visually impaired, or have other print reading disabilities. This is a treaty that blind advocates from around the world have been working on for over ten years. Its goal is to increase the availability of books in braille, large print, and audio formats for those who cannot read print books, by allowing nonprofit organizations that produce books in such alternate formats to share them with similar nonprofit organizations, and individuals known to have disabilities affecting their ability to read, in other countries. BVA and other national organizations of blind Americans have been waiting for our government to ratify this treaty for five years. Now that it has done so, we look forward to the resources it will make available to our members who like to read.

There are very few legislative working days left in 2018, as members of both houses of Congress will be taking time off to campaign for re-election, and to observe the fast-approaching holidays. As a result, members of Congress will have limited opportunities to pass additional legislation. However, they will have some time to act on bills that members can agree on for their broad appeal and

wide bipartisan support. BVA is hoping that one of the bills that will fall into this category is HR6421. This bill takes an innovative approach to funding research into the prevention and treatment of eye diseases by proposing that the government sell bonds to cover the cost of such research. The bill's authors believe that investors will purchase bonds in order to fund such worthwhile research, and if they are successful, proponents believe that a similar approach could be taken to funding of research on other vital health concerns. We are urging the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, which is

currently considering this bill, to send it to the full House quickly so that it can be acted upon prior to the end of this Congress in December, 2018. Those of you who are reading this article who may wish to help get this legislation across the Congressional finish line can contact your own members of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor HR6421, the Eye Bond bill.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at BVA national headquarters.



## Operation Peer Support (OPS) News

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*Operation Peer Support (OPS) is a program designed to support the hundreds of men and women who are returning to the U.S. blinded, or experiencing significant visual impairment in connection with their service fighting the Global War on Terror; Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).*

### **Blinded Veterans Complete Kayaking Grand Canyon's Colorado River** by Chet Curtis

Five blinded veterans from the congressionally chartered Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), supported by members of Team River Runner (TRR) have just completed kayaking 226 miles of the Colorado River which included some of the most dangerous rapids in the nation.

Begun on 1 September, the 12-day journey started at Lees Ferry, Colorado and ended at Diamond Creek near Flagstaff, Arizona. Team River Runner provided three kayaking instructors per veteran, along with other volunteers helping the blinded veterans navigate the Grand Canyon category four and five rapids.

“We each had three guides,” said Brian Harris, one of the veteran participants. “A guide in front who let us know what was ahead, another to the



(L-R) Steve Baskis, Kathy Champion, Brian Harris, Lonnie Bedwell and Travis Fugate.

side to give us warnings and another following behind who would help in case of any trouble. It worked very well.”

The Grand Canyon section of the Colorado River, like several other big-water western rivers, uses a scale of 1-10 for rapids, 10 being the most difficult.

“The most difficult rapids we experienced,” said Harris, “were the ones in which the waves were high and came at you from the sides as opposed to coming at you from the front, but we had trained for this for nine months and knew what to do.”

Harris, at first had his doubts about kayaking the river.

“I’m a blind, below the kneecap amputee,” said Harris, “so after four strokes and two surgeries, I was at the point where I didn’t think I could do much in adaptive sports but, not only did I take it to the next level, but I proved I can succeed at what I put my mind to.”

Lonnie Bedwell, a blinded Navy veteran and team leader and life member of BVA said, “These BVA veterans are demonstrating to the public their accomplishments to inspire others with disabilities to continue to participate in recreational activities.”

Bedwell, who kayaked the Colorado River in 2013, 2015, and again in 2016 is the first blinded veteran to navigate the difficult river.

“Increased cooperation and understanding between these veterans constantly build confidence,” said Bedwell.

Army veteran Steve Baskis considered this the experience of a lifetime.

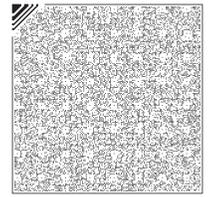
“I never thought I would kayak the Grand Canyon, but after meeting Lonnie and working with him and other veterans over the past few years, a dream became reality,” said Baskis. “I recall nine years ago paddling across a placid lake in

Portland, Oregon, feeling like I did not paddle well.

At the time, I had only been an injured soldier for a year or two and my left arm and hand did not function well because of severe vascular and nerve damage. Deep down I wanted to paddle better and I wanted to pursue moving water. Over the years, I got the chance to work all over the country on different types of white water, building skills and confidence to pursue more rivers. Blindness provides focus, all that I am thinking about is the sound in front of me coming from my guide and all the technique related to paddling the boat. I truly have to focus before entering the big rapids. Focusing on my breathing and relaxing my body, allows me to track my guide’s monotonous, repetitive verbal communication. The canyon was absolutely a huge rush, tranquil and serene moments, interrupted by roaring wild rapids. There is something about a blind person paddling independently through chaotic whitewater, you truly feel empowered when you make it to the bottom of the rapid successfully, still on your boat. The trip was truly special for me and is hard to put into words sometimes. You had to be there on the trip to feel the energy from everyone and the accomplishment everyone felt.”

Travis Fugate, a blind veteran, mentioned, “I don’t think I will ever say ‘I can’t’ again.” This seemed to be the sentiment among all the blind veterans as their hard work and can-do attitude throughout the trip, inspired their veteran guides and safety boaters.

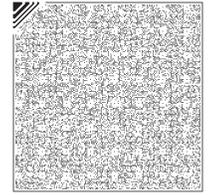
The team was led by Dave Robey, a retired Navy Captain and the program director of TRR. Other members of the



Blinded Veterans included retired Army veterans Steve Baskis, Travis Fugate, Kathy Champion, and Brian Harris.

TRR is an adaptive paddling adventure program for wounded and disabled veterans, their family members, and other non-military disabled paddlers in communities across the nation. The organization began service to returning wounded service people at Walter Reed Military Medical Center in 2004. Since their formation, it has placed 10,000+ veterans into kayaks in more than 60 chapters nationwide. Follow the vets here at [www.trr.org](http://www.trr.org).

**Upcoming OPS Events**  
*Heroes New Hope Foundation all-inclusive turkey hunting trip for blinded veterans.*



This event will host 2-4 blinded veterans for an all-inclusive turkey hunt which will include travel, lodging, license fees, tags, and meals. All attendees will have a professional guide to assist them in all aspects of this event. Dates TBD.

## **Blind Veteran Tosses Out First Pitch at Kauffman Stadium**

Courtesy of Mark Roundtree / [mroundtree@leavenworth](mailto:mroundtree@leavenworth)

On Nov. 11, 2004, U.S. Army Capt. Tim Hornik was on patrol in Baghdad when he was shot in the head by a sniper. It resulted in the total loss of his eyesight.

Since then, the 38-year-old has been on a mission to demonstrate that people with impaired vision can do anything.

Hornik was among 13 visually impaired veterans who regularly receive treatment and support from the Veteran's Administration. They were the special guests of the Kansas City Royals for their game against the Chicago White Sox at Kauffman Stadium on the 17th anniversary of 9/11.

"I'm ecstatic that this all came together," Hornik said. "You can't replace what the VA does for veterans."

Hornik threw out the ceremonial first pitch. Flanked by program members and active duty members of the armed forces, – as well as his service dog Barney, a black

Labrador – the right-hander stood in front of the mound, was directed where to throw and tossed the pitch to backup catcher Cam Gallagher.

The pre-game ceremonies on Armed Forces Night included the color guard from Fort Leavenworth and a flyover by a Stealth bomber from Whiteman Air Force Base.

There are approximately 200 veterans in the VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System's visually impaired program.

"They leave me speechless," said Dawn Clouse, program director. "They are such special people. Tim is a perfect example. He's all about other people. He's all about educating that visually impaired people can do anything."

After the first pitch, Hornik was presented the ball. He then gave the ball to Clouse, who organized the trip along with Joe Burks, public affairs officer for the VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System.



Tim Hornik, BVA District 2 Region Director, shakes hands with Kansas City Royal Catcher Cam Gallagher after throwing out the first pitch before a game last August.

Clouse said the VA tries to do at least two significant outings each year with the visually impaired group.

“The group is just veterans coming together to interact and regain a sense of independence,” Hornik said.

Not all of the veterans are 100 percent blind. Clouse said the majority of the members in the group have age-related or disease-related visual impairments. Only a few, like Hornik, are blind because of combat injuries.

Bernard Hoffman, a 93-year-old World War II veteran of the Army Air Corps, is a member of the program as well. He visited throughout the evening with Hornik and others at the game.

“He’s very personable and congenial,” Hoffman said. “This program is good for him and all of us. It’s a marvelous program.”

Hornik was just as impressed with Hoffman.

“The intergenerational aspect of this program is an amazing thing,” Hornik said. “They have some amazing stories. For us in the younger generation, we are carrying their stories into the future.”

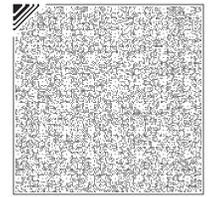
Hornik is the CEO of the Blind Not Alone organization and serves as the director of District 2 of the Blinded Veterans Association.

He lives in Lawrence, Kansas, with his wife and daughters. In addition to his

outreach efforts in support of the visually impaired, he takes part in adaptive sports such as tandem cycling and running.

“It’s an honor to be able to recognize veterans who have done so much for our country on Armed Forces Day, especially

our visually impaired veterans here tonight,” said Rudy Klopfer, director of the VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System.



## VA Adaptive Sports/Activities at National TEE Tournament

by Paul Kaminsky USN/Ret

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I am a retired Navy veteran, BVA Life Member and returned once again to what was the 25th annual National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament in Iowa.

As a 30-year Navy veteran, sports or physical activities were very much a part of my general nature. Basketball, volleyball, bowling and especially golf were a major part of my physical activities. At the age of 32, when I first began to lose my vision due to macular degeneration, I believed the days of playing my beloved pastimes were over.

I was a seven handicap back in the good old days, and thought I had put away my golf clubs for good. Then I learned about the National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament in Iowa from other BVA members. Since the first experience I have made the trek from Florida to Iowa for the annual event 14 times. My vision allows me mostly peripheral sight, but nothing in front of me. I can make out an image of the course but not some of the hazard areas and definitely not where the ball goes. But once my golf buddy lines me up, the muscle memory is still there.”

Last year, I had my first hole-in-one. I was quite surprised of the Ace, but I’m used to disabled veterans overcoming obstacles whether on the course or in life

in general. I guess that’s why I’m out there. I can show other veterans that we can do this!

Another great thing about the Iowa TEE Tournament is that I don’t make the trek to the Midwest on my own. My wife Maureen joins me and takes advantage of the companion program available to the veteran’s partner or caregiver. Our partners, spouses, or caregivers drop us veterans off where we are kept active so they can relax and have fun. My wife continues to enjoy the companion activities year after year and looks forward to it every year.



Mike Foster (Golf Buddy) standing behind Paul Kaminsky while he makes an approach chip onto the Green.



Paul Kaminsky and bowling trophy.

While the companion program provides rest and recreation, it also offers a valuable network for the caregivers and companions. As the veterans connect with other veterans, the spouses, partners and caregivers likewise meet new people and get to talking and compare lives and note that they share some of the same experiences. My wife tells me it helps to know she is not by herself. She also says it gives her emotional support. My wife has said, “It’s relaxing for Paul and he gets time with friends; I love seeing him have fun.”

The TEE Tournament is not just about golf. Other activities such as kayaking, horseshoes, horseback riding, bowling, and for the past couple of years tandem bikes have been brought in to provide veterans with the experience of tandem bike riding. Plus, the TEE is not just for those who play golf, it is also for those that might wish to learn about the art of golf and be learning from a real golf Pro. Many of the participants are first-timers to the sport.

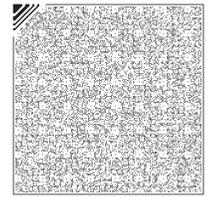
The National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament is but just one of the VA adaptive sports and arts clinics

sponsored by the VA. Here are the available clinics provided by the VA for disabled veterans:

1. National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic
2. National Veterans Golden Age Games
3. National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
4. National Veterans Wheelchair Games
5. National Veterans Creative Arts Competition
6. National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament

For more information on the VA adaptive clinics talk with your VIST Coordinator or visit: [www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/)

I would encourage all to try to attend one or more of these adaptive clinics. Some of the members at the TEE Tournament were in their 90’s and having a great time. The TEE this year had over 400 applicants and approximately 280 participants. There were almost 800 volunteers working together to make the veterans week long activities relaxing and stress free. Each morning breakfast began at 6 am and golfing began around 8 am. There were multiple golf courses which completely closed down so the veterans had total access to each of them. After a day of golf or other assigned activities a terrific dinner spread was set up and everyone enjoyed a great meal. After dinner the TEE would have entertainment or other fun activities. It was basically so busy that once you got into bed, the next thing you knew was it was 6 am again. Another great aspect of the TEE is that it is held at the Riverside Casino. So, if you wish to challenge Lady Luck this is the place where that is possible. Again, check with your VIST Coordinator for more information.



# Around BVA

## BVA Members Honor Memory of Major Charles Robert Soltes Jr. at 14th Annual Memorial Golf Event by Tom Zampieri



Former Navy Petty Officer Lonnie Bedwell addresses the audience on overcoming adversity.

On a beautiful, typical southern California day Monday, October 8, three blinded veterans and other local California area blinded BVA comrades attended the 14th Annual Major Charles Robert Soltes Memorial Golf Tournament in Irvine, California on Columbus Day. The BVA members joined 104 golfers for the annual competition to honor Major Soltes at the Oak Creek Golf Club. In October 2004, Major Soltes became the first U.S. Army optometrist-soldier killed in action while serving on active duty in Iraq where he served with a Fort Bragg Special Operations public health team.

The BVA veterans taking part this year included; Navy veteran Lonnie Bedwell and Marine Corps veteran Carlos Pere who is president of Florida

Regional Group BVA. Maj. Thomas Zampieri (Ret.) Vice President of BVA. World War II blinded veteran Howard Payne, whose local efforts at teaching all disabled children to golf, attended, and in the morning, gave Lonnie and Carlos some of his famous “putting training” and stories about blind golfing.

The keynote speaker for the golf event was former U.S. Navy Petty Officer, Lonnie Bedwell, who was critically injured in a hunting accident in 1997 that took his sight instantly. That didn’t stop him from raising three daughters as a single father and becoming a renowned adventure sports athlete. He holds first blind descents kayaking the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, the Zambezi River in Africa, and the Gauley River in West Virginia – some of the most challenging stretches of whitewater in the world. He was named a 2015 National Geographic Adventurer of the Year. He has climbed notable peaks such as Mt. Kilimanjaro, he downhill



World War II army BVA life member Howard Payne and Dr. Sally Dang Low Vision Optometrist at the Major Rob Soltes Blind Rehab VA Center.



skis, and volunteers in his hometown in southern Indiana doing roofing, construction and supporting veteran related nonprofits and local schools.

During the evening dinner and awards, Lonnie kept the golfers amazed with both photographs and video clips from the September 1 to September 12, team of four other BVA members on 226 historic kayaking adventure miles through the Grand Canyon. During the afternoon Lonnie and Carlos both visited with all the golfers and were asked to pose for photographs with many who thanked the BVA members for their service.

As always, the entire Soltes family welcomed the BVA members and Rob's friends, professional colleagues and many of his fellow veterans expressed how dedicated he was to serving visually impaired veterans. The funds raised at the annual golf tournament are a major source of the Operation Peer Support (OPS) program, which supports various events during the year. OPS now brings together both Gulf War I and Gulf War II era blinded veterans with older generations of veterans to share their experiences, and also participate in various recreational sports events throughout the year. We thanked the dozen volunteers and family members who make this all possible each October and help light up the darkness with their donations.

### **BVA Member Goes Deep Sea Fishing**

Emerald Coast Regional Group President Darryl Goldsmith went deep sea fishing with 78 other combat and disabled veterans sponsored by Heroes on the Water. Darryl was the number one fisherman with a catch of 29 fish.



Emerald Coast Regional Group President Darryl Goldsmith proudly displays his prize catch of the day sponsored by Heroes On The Water. Darryl was the #1 Fisherman with his catch of 29 fish.

### **Louisiana/Mississippi Region See WW II Aircraft at Air, Land and Sea Festival**

by Gary Schoelerman

On October 13, 2018, twenty-five blinded veterans from the Louisiana/Mississippi region and their escorts met at the World War II Air, Land and Sea Festival held at the Lakefront Airport in New Orleans, LA. There were about thirty aircraft flown in by the Commemorative Air Force, everything from cargo planes, C-45 and C-47, a number of bombers, B-25, B-26, B-17 and the B-29, and a wide variety of fighters that flew both in the Pacific and European theaters. We had four WW II veterans among our group, two were crew chiefs on B-24's, it was interesting listening to their "stories". There were also a number of WW II land war machines on display, jeeps, tanks, duce-half and others all in working condition. For the sea lovers the WW II Museum had a fully restored PT Boat "305" docked by the airport. There was ample entertainment by the beautiful Liberty Belles who sang popular tunes of

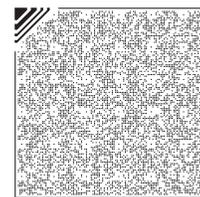


Earl Forstall (center) describing to Joe Burns (right) and Gary Schoelerman (left) the workings of the C-47.

the 40's and made over the WW II Vets and ignored the rest of us. There were also a number of interviews with WW II veterans including one with the last surviving member of the Doolittle Raiders, Lt. Col. Dick Cole. The Louisiana/ Mississippi Regional Group would like to thank Kaitlin Borri, the Recreation Therapist at the Biloxi BRC for bringing a number of their clients and staff to assist and VIST Robin Sniffen for bringing a large number of vets from the Gulf Coast area and our fellow BVA members and friends from throughout LA and MS for making this annual event a great success. We also want to thank the National World War II Museum, the second most popular and visited museum in the country, for their assistance at the gate and for the generous discount that they offered the BVA members. Hopefully next year the B-24 will be there and our B-24 crew chiefs Mr. Earl, age 99 and Mr. Jack, age 96 will be able to give us a tour of the aircraft. See you next year.

## It's Happening in the Georgia Regional Group

by Jesse Jones Jr.



### Honoring our POWs



Vice President GRG Floyd B. Everett joins many Veterans Service Organizations standing tall during ceremonies at the Georgia State Capital in honor of POWs and MIAs.

### Meet the Newly Weds of the GRG



(seated) Mr. Percy and Mrs. Loretta Phillips of Atlanta, GA. Showing our support as one blinded veteran helping another. Standing (L-R) Blinded veteran from North Carolina, Mr. David Fawcett, from Dublin GA., Chapter Treasurer Ms. Bonita Chappell, GRG President Jesse Jones Jr., and Dennis Darnes, Atlanta GA Chapter member. Not pictured is the legendary B.B. King's daughter Ms. Claudette King, who sang at the reception.



## Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Jay McLeod, Rev. PhD.DD



Greetings and blessings to all of you today. I am once again honored to be able to share what God puts in my heart to share with you in this Chaplains Corner. It is always a pleasure to serve and deliver to you this article.

Once again, we find ourselves heading into the holiday season. Soon there will be the smell of fresh pies cooling after being baked. Turkeys and hams in the oven and mom's stuffing beside the mac & cheese waiting on the table. Decorations going up around the house. Shopping along with gift giving to friends and family. Good times and good memories to be made. Time for thanks as well. During this time of the year I begin my reflection of things to be thankful for over this past year. I also think about those currently serving and remembering what it was like during the holidays on active duty. Those troops who were able to go home to be with family and friends, as well as those left keeping the operations going.

When reflecting, I am also reminded of just how fast it seems that time goes by as we get older. We should take time and smell the roses. Well personally this year has been one that has really been great. As a minister it has had many challenges as well. However, through it all there has been much to be thankful for. Veterans Day is starring us in the face. My wife and I are going to visit fellow veterans in the homeless shelters, hospitals, nursing homes and senior living facilities. This year we have decided to

adopt a veteran for the holidays. That means we are going to find a veteran in need and provide holiday meals for them. We are also going to be volunteering through AARP at holiday events. I challenge you to go out into your communities this year and volunteer also. While I was chatting with this WWII veteran not long ago our conversation was about the forgotten troops who are still living regardless of when or where they served. It's not hard to find Veterans to spend time with. One of the best holidays I've had was at the Salvation Army with homeless veterans who have no connection to their families. Get out and spend the holidays with other veterans. We are all a band of brothers and sisters. Please reach out to me if you or another veteran is in of need assistance. I find that the more I am active helping other veterans in need the more it makes me feel like I am still serving this great nation I love so much. There are homeless veterans in every city who could use your help even if it's an encouraging word.

Be blessed.

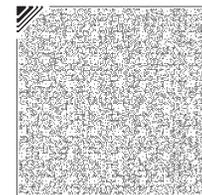
### Did you know?

Braille, a tactile reading and writing system used by people who are blind, was actually based on a tactile military code created by the French Army called "night writing." The raised-dot code allowed soldiers to communicate silently at night without light.



# Auxiliary's View

by Edna Kirksey Dixon



What a busy year – I cannot believe it is almost Christmas again. Can you? The convention

was wonderful – as usual. Everything seemed to flow smoothly. Hopefully by the first of 2019, the BVA Bulletin will be on line so you can read from your screen. If you call the national office and request it, a paper copy can be mailed to you.

Many of you will remember one of our past presidents, Hazel Compton, she made her transition in 2016. We are sad to report that her husband, Clyde, passed away this summer. Please be in prayer for the family. Address for cards: P.O. Box 267, Richland, VA 24641.

In south Alabama in October we expect some cool weather, but the temperatures are still in the 90's. Will fall never come? I am having a hard time believing it is time for us to be thinking about Thanksgiving and Christmas. Is your calendar as full as mine? As



Pictured are the BVAA National Officers for 2018/2019. Reading left to right - Rev. Edna Dixon - Reporter, Ben Holmes - Secretary, Pat Stancliff - Vice President and President Sandy Krasnodemski. Not pictured Carly Hytinen Treasurer.

caregivers there is little time to reflect on the passing of the seasons. My mother always said, "Fix a cup of tea, sit down and take three deep breaths." Everything looks better after tea.

The Silent Auction was very successful this year – the latest report from our National Treasurer, Carl Hytinen shows over \$2,000.00 added to the Scholarship Fund. So please prepare some of your craft items to send for next year and encourage applications be submitted.

Let me hear from you –even if it is just a note or something you want to ask or share. This column is for all of us.

Now for some closing thoughts: Did you ever wonder what makes God smile the most – when we take more because we feel entitled to it, or when we give a little extra something back just because we can? If you want to make God laugh – tell Him your plans.

Joshua 1:5 "The Lord said, I will never leave you nor forsake you." God gives comfort to those in need of His comfort – He is the mighty Comforter.

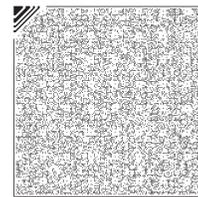
Be comforted by God's blessings as we look toward a new and better 2019.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

# From the Field Staff

by Claudia Belk

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## Understanding the Mission Act

President Trump signed the VA Mission Act on June 6, 2018. This law expands healthcare options for veterans and it replaces the VA Choice Program which ended on May 31, 2018. The act will allow for VA to use community resources to extend medical services to veterans. The act also included funds for VA education and training in hiring of more VA staff, recruitment, and review of medical facilities.

The part of this bill which many disabled veterans have been waiting for is the expansion of caregiver benefits. However, not all disabled veterans are eligible for this entitlement. The benefit has expanded to veterans of all war eras. The caregiver stipend benefits will begin with veterans of Vietnam, Korean, and WWII Eras, and they will begin paying these caregiver stipends on October 1, 2019; Persian Gulf War Era veterans will follow at a later date. Veterans eligible for the monthly, tax-free stipend for a primary caregiver are as follows:

- Veterans who have sustained or aggravated a serious injury — including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma or other mental disorder — in the line of duty; and
- Need personal care services to perform one or more activities of daily living and/or need supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological impairment or injury.

If the above criteria are met, the veteran should apply through the caregiver coordinator at the VA medical center of jurisdiction. The coordinator will determine if the veteran meets the criteria and if approved will be assigned to a Patient Aligned Care (PAC) team. The team will make clinical evaluations of the eligible veteran and determine the level of care he or she will need based on the level of independence the veteran demonstrates and how much assistance is needed in activities of daily living (ADLs), and / or level of supervision or protection the veteran needs. The veteran will be then rated as follows:

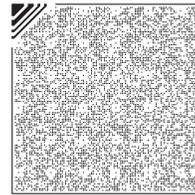
- High Tier: Equates to a maximum of 40 hours of care per week.
- Medium Tier: Equates to a maximum of 25 hours of care per week.
- Low Tier: Equates to a maximum of 10 hours of care per week.

The Caregiver support line can provide information on the Caregiver Support Program along with eligibility requirements and can be found at:

Phone: **1-855-260-3274**, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time

Caregiver website at: **[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)**

# What You Can Do Right Now to Fulfill Your Responsibilities as a BVA Member



*"I wasn't ready to stop serving my country... That's what led me to think, no matter that I'm not serving active military, in one way or another, I'm going to continue to serve. That's when I started making plans for how I was going to continue to take care of soldiers, Marines, airmen, sailors, Coast Guard people and their families. I visit military and VA hospitals." – EM*

**BVA's mission is to reach out to veterans who are blind or visually impaired. Right now, there are approximately:**

- 38,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans enrolled in the VA whose vision is impaired due to traumatic brain injuries
- 4,900 war veterans who have experienced penetrating eye injuries
- older veterans who are losing vision due to age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, stroke, or diabetic retinopathy
- veterans of all ages with vision loss that is not combat or service-related

*"BVA played a huge role in my recovery. Now, I can't wait to come alongside someone else who's in a similar situation as mine. I'll say, 'Dude, keep your chin up. It's going to get better.'" – NH*

**How can you reach them?**

Visit the waiting rooms of blind rehabilitation centers and low vision clinics, veterans hospitals and senior centers. Inform your VIST coordinator that you are willing to mentor veterans with vision loss.

Listen, support, and tell them about BVA. Be prepared to speak with them about BVA activities, including Operation Peer Support events. Bring along some BVA Membership Recruitment Cards.

If you meet someone needing further assistance with claims and benefits, share their contact information with the BVA Field Service Resource Center.

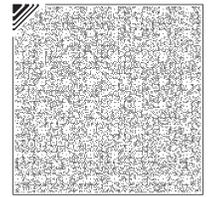
*"Veterans love it when I call. I never leave them hanging. I want to go the extra mile for these guys. It's something I just have to do. I never say, 'I don't know.' I find out. Maybe in 20 years, it will be me, and someone will help me if I need it." – SW*



# District 2 Director's Report

by Tim Hornik

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BVA entered my life as my family and I transitioned from the military to civilian life. We approached this process by openly discussing our thoughts, goals, and concerns. BVA as an organization stands at a similar point. This past year brought about a tremendous amount of change. New District Directors represent normal changes within the structure of the organization, while our new Executive Director and discussions about a new home for BVA caught many off guard. Just as my family and I boldly faced our personal challenges transitioning, I encourage we each openly and professionally engage with regional group leaders, us District Directors, and senior BVA leadership in discussing your questions and ideas for furthering our motto to support our fellow veterans with visual impairments.

The first discussions occurred during the National Convention. Within the District 2 Caucus, the assembled regional group delegates and members reviewed and felt strongly about the financial positioning and actions of BVA. We also agreed upon establishing a District 2 teleconference that will occur on the second Monday of each month at 1:00 pm Central Time. But the best example of our membership speaking up about the direction of BVA transpired during the business meeting with the election of the new officers and establishing the \$25 life membership.

The next step in our transition process is the most important, executing our mission. We each possess the latest BVA handouts, brochures, and membership

applications to share, but our peers and the general public desire proof through action. It pleases me to know that throughout September and well into November, District 2 regional groups unified our membership through special events and activities.

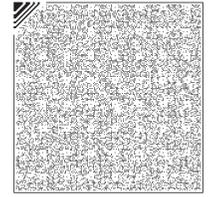
The Michigan, Heartland, and Wisconsin Regional Groups deserve a round of applause for their successes throughout September. Regional Group collaborated with the VIST program to unite blinded Veterans together for a day of fishing. The heartland Regional Group took it a step further by being represented alongside the Eastern Kansas VIST program and throwing out the first pitch on September 11th at the Kansas City Royals versus Chicago White Sox military appreciation game. The Pièce De Résistance comes from Wisconsin's 3rd annual Visually Impaired Persons Experiencing the Road (VIPER) Ride. This incredible opportunity pairs blinded Veterans, aka tail gunners, with a motorcyclist pilot, on a fun day of cruising the road. The event features a great lunch where everyone celebrates the remarkable achievements held by all.

Our momentum continued into October with White Cane Day celebrations. Once again the strong partnerships built between VIST and other BRS programs and our regional groups inspired and informed countless veterans. The Wisconsin, Michigan, Heartland, and other Regional Groups staffed tables at their VAMC and other public locations. A great example is the Heartland Regional Group hosting their

midyear meeting at the National World War I Museum and Memorial, uniting blinded veterans from the VIST support groups from the Columbia, Kansas City, and Eastern Kansas VAMC. As a special note, BVA members from Ohio accompanied me during the inaugural ceremonies for the new Veterans Museum in Columbus, OH. We proudly presented BVA's colors alongside our fellow VSO's.

Regional groups to individual members contributed towards BVA's notoriety with various other actions and events. Sean Wilbur from the Nebraska Regional Group enabled seven airmen the ability to celebrate the Air Force's birthday. Danny Wallace and Timothy Hornik were guided by Greg Miller and Matthew Battiston as they carried the American flag over 160 miles over two days by running and cycling in support of the Team, Red, White, and Blue Old Glory Relay. Getting the vote out, regional groups and VIST programs throughout the district offered accessible voter education sessions, so our peers

may uphold the sacred duties for all citizens we served to protect. Finally, countless of our regional group leaders and volunteers spent countless hours talking with other blinded veterans, educating each other on the actions of BVA to recent personal achievements.



This is just a small sampling of what is possible when regional groups forge a strong relationship with their members, VIST coordinators, and community entities. The Blinded Veterans Association relies on the service you each provide, for without your selfless service, there is no one else left to ensure blinded veterans have the knowledge, resources, and encouragement to take their rightful place within their communities. I hope these examples inspires each of you to devise anything from an awesome group activity to simply calling a fellow veteran between now and the next issue of the BVA bulletin.

## A Home for Our Troops

by Steve Baskis

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A veteran in a wheelchair referred me to an organization three or four years ago. I was reluctant to pursue the opportunity and benefit because I was single and did not feel I qualified. After some thinking I made a decision to call and ask some questions. At first I didn't believe I was going to be selected, but they came back and said they would really love to work with me. Fast forward three years and now I am in my new home here in Montrose, Colorado.

The home is designed for wheelchair use but I do not have roll under counters or stove tops. They worked with me and provided a home that would suit me best for my visual impairment and blindness. I have technology built into the house to give me a great special awareness and the ability to interact with the technology through my mobile device. I have camera systems that have motion detecting capabilities; these come in handy when I want to know if a vehicle is entering my



Steve Baskis proudly accepts his new home in ceremony sponsored by Homes for Our Troops.

driveway and whether or not someone is approaching my front door. I can video conference with a person at my front door remotely or physically at my house through my mobile device. I can also share the camera systems to family and friends anywhere in the world and they can talk to people standing in from of the cameras all located around my home. I have the ability to operate my thermostat independently and control the

climate of my home. The house has zero thresholds which makes it easy to walk in and out of main doors without tripping.

The house also sits on a concrete pad and is a ranch style build house, which means I don't have to deal with staircases. In my master bedroom, they provided a safe room for me, which can withstand hurricane or tornado winds.

I look forward to helping Homes for Our Troops better understand how to best serve blind and visually impaired veterans. I am only one of a few blind veterans who has received a specially adapted home from the organization. Moving forward I plan to communicate what works and what does not work to them. I also plan on integrating and setting up brand new technology as it becomes available. Right now, I am truly excited to organize my home and make it my own over the next few months and years. Homes for Our Troops is truly building homes and rebuilding lives.



## **BVAs Accessibility Efforts Makes My Healthy Vet Usable**

by Timothy Hornik, LMSW, CATIS

The Blinded Veterans Association might not be a technology company or developer, but our advocacy and actions made the VA revamp its digital presence. The VA's accessibility policies stems from the Rehabilitation Act's most notable sections, §503 for employment, §504 for physical environments, and §508 for digital communications. The

biggest strides may be seen within the Veterans healthcare management tool, My Healthy Vet (MHV)

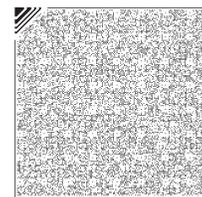
The ire of many blinded Veterans involved the cumbersome to inaccessible interface of MHV. MHV aims to provide one with online tools to control and obtain information related to our healthcare needs, like refill prescriptions,

schedule appointments, and contact their healthcare teams. The original implementation left many screen reader and magnifier users unable to perform even the most basic tasks. Recent updates dramatically changed this as Veterans may easily navigate through all of the tools through an easy to access top menu bar to quickly preform specific tasks through well-defined headings and links. If you wish to take full advantage of MHV, here are a couple of tips and tricks.

On every page of MHV, a top menu bar enables you to navigate all of the available tools and features. Screen readers announce the menu bar as a series of expandable and collapsible buttons, and visually they look like standard tabs commonly found on webpages and apps. Expanding each tab just requires. You to activate the button, which will uncover the various links under each tab. It's worth the time to review each of these buttons to. Understand the wealth of information and activities available under areas like the Home, Personal Information, Pharmacy, Get Care, and Secure Messaging buttons. For example, under Personal Information you can update your profile, so you can receive email notifications for upcoming appointments. Under Pharmacy one may print out a complete list of their VA prescriptions or add any over the counter and supplements to their profile. Get Care will allow you to schedule new appointments.

If you just wish to visit the most popular features related to your medications, appointments, or messaging your healthcare team, look no further than the main home page. The page's body contains several level 1 headings for Pharmacy, Appointments,

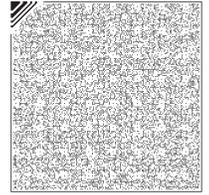
and Messaging. Each heading contains three links for the most frequently visited services and tools of MHV. So refilling your prescriptions may be completed in mere moments.



These accessibility improvements to MHV resulted in a very usable and accessible tool for us to take control of our healthcare. When comparing the current version of MHV to an assessment compiled for a BVA testimony, the two are unrecognizable. The previously mentioned menu bar, clearly labeled links, understandable form and text fields, and reliance on tables makes updating information to checking on upcoming The main drawback for MHV in its current state is the amount of information one needs to input. One will need to input their own vitals, lab information, emergency point of contact, and so much more to fully harness My Healthy Vet's capabilities. Even the associated My Healthy Vet apps for iOS and Android suffer from these same pitfalls. They are very accessible, but they would be very useful if they just allowed one to import data from integrated health related apps on both smart phone OS and then shared it with the main MHV website. For more information on using MHV with a screen reader, check out the Blind Vet Tech podcast series, Demystifying My Healthy Vet.

# Of Note

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## OrCam and BVA Presents OrCam 2.0 Devices to Blinded Veterans

OrCam and BVA presented two blinded veterans with the OrCam 2.0 MyEye along with lifetime memberships in BVA following their appearance on the Dr. Phil Show on 8 October.

Retired Army Major Scotty Smiley was severely wounded in Iraq and he tells Dr. Phil the MyEye was an important component on his path to recovery. He appeared on the show along with his wife Tiffany.

The OrCam MyEye is a small device, about the size of your finger, which can be attached to glasses. The device scans text in front of it and reads it out loud. It can identify any type of text, money and even people's faces. Scotty has been using the device for a year. The couple has partnered with OrCam to help other families get access to the device.

Scotty told Dr. Phil it changed his life. He said it not only helps him work, but it allows him to read to his kids. On the show, he demonstrated how the device works by reading a poem to his 9-year-old son Graham. Tiffany said this was her favorite part of the segment.

"It's a cool bonding experience that they've had and they just love it," Tiffany said. "He saw his dad and he holds his dad's hand the whole time."

OrCam MyEye can cost a few thousand dollars. The Department of Veteran Affairs does offer free devices to those who qualify. According to OrCam, if you have VA health coverage and are low vision or legally blind then you should be eligible for an OrCam device. They encourage people to contact their optometrist.

Following the show, OrCam presented two veterans in the audience with free OrCam 2.0 MyEye devices.

## Researchers Develop Reprogrammable Braille in Hopes of Making Books More Accessible for Blind Readers

In recent years, it has become easier for blind and low-sight users to read text from computers and tablets, thanks to advances in accessibility technology that have greatly improved the standards for refreshable Braille displays. But physical Braille books have lagged behind. An average book takes up several volumes of thick Braille paper, which are a pain to carry around. For example, the Braille translation of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* spans 14 volumes and takes up a whopping 1,000 pages of Braille paper, compared with the standard printed version, which is a single 766-page volume. The heft of most Braille books makes it challenging for students to take literature and textbooks home, and experts have warned that the inaccessibility of Braille books and the prohibitive cost of refreshable Braille displays have contributed to a "Braille literacy crisis."

But that could be changing. Researchers at Harvard's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences are developing a novel technique to make Braille books more portable and convenient.

They're calling it reprogrammable Braille, and it's an elegant concept: Researchers crafted a flexible elastic shell, similar to a slightly curved ruler, upon which they imprinted dots using a stylus—a similar process to how

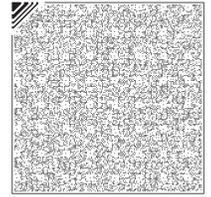
traditional Braille pages are printed. The shell retains the imprints of the stylus, but users can “erase” the imprints by stretching the shell, allowing new configurations to be imprinted. In tests, Harvard researchers were able to control the number of dots, their position, and their order anywhere along the shell.

The researchers first tested the idea of reprogrammable Braille using an inverted plastic fruit bowl. However, the approach is not limited to sturdy plastic materials. The researchers’ method is “scale-independent,” meaning that it has the potential to be implemented on a wide variety of surfaces, ranging in thickness from one-atom graphene to thicker paper.

This is not the first attempt to make Braille books more portable. In 2014, a British project called ANAGRAPHIS created a working prototype of a Braille e-reader. The model functioned by heating paraffin wax, which expanded to produce Braille dots. However, ANAGRAPHIS ran out of funding, and the project was shut down.

Tony Stephens, the director of advocacy and governmental affairs for the American Council of the Blind, is excited by the potential of reprogrammable Braille to improve accessibility. “If it’s able to get into the hands of people at an affordable price, I think this definitely will have some positive impacts on encouraging greater use of Braille [and] creating greater access to Braille material ... that’s often difficult to get a hold of,” Stephens told Slate. He hopes that this innovation will be a boon to Braille literacy. “This is a conversation that really runs through our community,” Stephens explained. “Is a person technically literate if they’re just listening to something? ... Those are serious concerns that we have because literacy helps in a lot of other areas than

just reading and talking: It helps cognition, it helps thinking and critical thinking, and ... trying to work your way through basic sentence structure and syntax.”



There’s still a lot of work to be done before reprogrammable Braille makes it easier for readers to carry Harry Potter books with them. While researchers have shown that reprogramming the shell is possible, they are still figuring out how to develop a mechanism that actually makes the changes to the page. Still, if the researchers can work out the kinks, this platform could transform Braille books’ accessibility, cutting their length down to a much more manageable size. That would be practically magical.

## **VA and DOD senior leaders commit to aligned electronic health records system rollout**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Secretaries of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense (DOD) signed a joint statement Sept. 26 pledging that their two departments will align their plans, strategies and structures as they roll out a new electronic health records (EHR) system that will allow VA and DOD to share patient data seamlessly.

Signed by Defense Secretary James N. Mattis and VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, the joint statement reinforces both departments’ commitment to ensuring the successful transition from a legacy patient-data system to a modernized one that will continue to support active-duty service members, Veterans and their families.

“The joint statement between DOD and VA represents tangible evidence of our commitment to change how we deliver

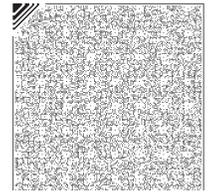
Veteran-focused, provider-friendly care,” Wilkie said. “The new EHR system will be interoperable with DOD, while also improving VA’s ability to collaborate and share information with community care providers. This will ease the burden on service members as they transition from military careers and will be supported by multiple medical providers throughout their lives.”

VA signed a contract with Cerner Corp. May 17 to replace VA’s 40-year-old legacy Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture (Vista) health care records technology over the next 10 years with the new Cerner system, which is in the pilot phase at DOD. Collaborating with DOD will ensure that VA: understands the challenges encountered as DOD deploys its EHR system called Military Health System GENESIS (MHS GENESIS); adapts an approach by applying lessons learned to anticipate and mitigate known issues; assesses prospective efficiencies to help deploy faster; and delivers an EHR that is fully interoperable.

“We are committed to partnering with the VA to support the lifetime care of our service members, Veterans and their families,” Mattis said. “This modern electronic health record will ensure those who serve our nation have quality health care as they transition from service member to Veteran.”

“The EHR will give health care providers a full picture of patient medical history, driving better clinical outcomes,” Wilkie said. “It will also help us identify Veterans proactively who are at higher risk for issues, such as opioid addiction and suicide, so health care providers can intervene earlier and save lives.” To view the joint statement, visit [vaww.va.gov/6102/graphics\\_resource\\_center.asp](http://vaww.va.gov/6102/graphics_resource_center.asp). For more information about VA’s

Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, go to [www.ehrm.va.gov](http://www.ehrm.va.gov).



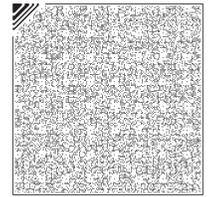
## **VA Releases National Suicide Data Report for 2005-2016 Analysis Is Part of VA’s Data-driven Approach to Suicide Prevention**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released national and state level findings from its most recent analysis of veteran suicide data, from 2005 to 2016. The analysis is part of VA’s ongoing examination of non-veteran and veteran death records that is being used to evaluate and improve VA’s Suicide Prevention Program.

The report yields several important insights:

From 2015 to 2016, the overall current and former service member suicide count decreased from 7,663 to 7,298 deaths (decrease of 365). From 2015 to 2016, the veteran specific suicide count decreased from 6,281 to 6,079 deaths (decrease of 202). From 2015 to 2016, the veteran unadjusted suicide rate decreased from 30.5/100,000 to 30.1/100,000. Overall, the fact remains that on average about 20 current or former service members die each day, six have been in VA health care and 14 were not. Rates of suicide were highest among younger veterans (ages 18-34) and lowest among older veterans (ages 55 and older). However, because the older veteran population is the largest, this group accounted for 58.1 percent of veteran suicide deaths in 2016. The rate of suicide among 18-34-year-old veterans continues to increase. The use of firearms as a method of suicide remains high. The percentage of suicide deaths that involved firearms was 67.0 percent in 2015 and 69.4 percent in 2016. Information regarding deaths among current service members is not included.

# In Remembrance



**The Blinded Veterans Association deeply regrets the passing of the following blinded veterans.**

## **Florida R.G.**

Marcus J. Reese  
William Kitt

## **GEM State R.G.**

Clifton E. Sharp  
Robert T. Morris

## **Heartland R.G.**

Luther Diserens  
Jow Joseph  
William Perry  
Marlin B. Dailey

## **Mid-Atlantic R.G.**

Roscoe David Bond  
Mary A. Jackson  
Washington M. Mason  
James E. Soper  
James W. Blackwell  
Herbert Bowlds  
Frank E. Baker  
Ezra H. Barnes  
Clyde E. Baumgardner  
Peggy Jean J. Daniel  
Joseph Ware  
Lottie G. Owen  
Joean Ritter  
John S. Walters  
Ronald G. Fulmore  
Donald E. Dudgeon  
James F. Collins  
Leo John Bonamy  
Lloyd Martin  
Walter F. Becker  
John Winston

## **Illinois R.G.**

Jack E. Winter  
Robert W. Miller  
Gerald V. Carneval  
Robert F. Schwilk

## **Kentuckiana R.G.**

James E. Gissing  
Joseph E. Burrs  
John L. Holder  
Hagar Garriott  
Hans J. Mueckenhoff

## **Louisiana R.G.**

Sullivan Scott

## **Maine R.G.**

Keith E. Lockhart

## **Michigan R.G.**

Donald G. Morris

## **Mid-Atlantic R.G.**

Clyde A. Compton

## **Montana R.G.**

John Janisi

## **Mountain State R.G.**

Alvin A. McMullin  
Ivan M. Cowager  
Cecil W. Morris  
Herbert A. Young

## **New Hampshire R.G.**

Albert Matkowsky  
James E. Palmquist  
William H. Thomson  
Ernest Ball  
John E. Bentley

## **NAT-Military Bases & NO State R.G.**

James Albert A. King

## **New York R.G.**

William Feinberg  
Hector Class

## **Northern California R.G.**

George R. Durand

## **Ohio Kentucky Indiana R.G.**

William D. McDermit  
Jerry Faddis  
Stephen B. Calhoun  
Michael T. Fumarola  
Roy D. Johnson t

## **Orange County R.G.**

Wilfred A. Francia  
Joseph P. Stafford

## **Oregon Columbia R.G.**

William J. Johnston  
Chester Knight  
Grant Coleman  
David L. Becker  
G.C. Holzgang  
Raymond W. Gevas  
Harold Ellingson  
Carl L. Roberts  
Antonio Innamorato

## **South Carolina R.G.**

Daniel N. Infinger  
Beaugard Blanding  
James E. Byrd  
John M. Reinhardt  
Marlyn D. Carter  
Kenneth G. Smith  
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Otis Coy Church, Jr  
Larry R. Mahan  
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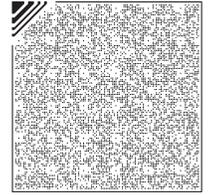
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## Final Thought

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The Veterans Creed is meant to inspire veterans to continue to serve and lead in their communities and our country, and to continue to make a difference in our world. Each element of the Creed is rooted in shared military tenets, the missions of participating veterans service organizations and in the altruistic ethos of the military veteran themselves. It is also meant to remind Americans that the principles and values veterans learned in the military - integrity, leadership, teamwork, selfless service - can greatly benefit our country.

## **THE EIGHT-POINT VETERAN'S CREED:**

1. I am an American Veteran
2. I proudly served my country
3. I live the values I learned in the military
4. I continue to serve my community, my country and my fellow veterans
5. I maintain my physical and mental discipline
6. I continue to lead and improve
7. I make a difference
8. I honor and remember my fallen comrades

